

May 2015 Newsletter
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue - Webster City, Iowa 50595
515-832-2232
<http://www.firstcongregationalwc.org/>



"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God."

--Ephesians 2: 19-22

Wow! Paul's words to the church at Ephesus make it sound like it's a real gift to belong to a church. And Paul is right! So often we tend to take our church for granted, and we forget what a powerful place church can be. Church is a place that is unlike any other, for as Paul reminds us, it is an opportunity to live in the *household of God*. Have you received an offer that good from any other place you've been to this week?

Sometimes we forget the many blessings we receive from belonging to our church, and so I thought it would do us all good to remember the many ways we are blessed when we live in the "household of God."

Our Church is a place that inspires us. When you come to First Congregational, what do you experience? You experience beauty and meaning everywhere—in beautiful stained-glass windows, in the sight of flowers, in uplifting music, in the poetic and challenging words of scripture, in the mystical symbols and rituals that convey deep truths about a greater world that is above, behind, around, and within our world. Our church is a place that can offer us a glimpse of a world of light and beauty, grace and truth that stands in stark contrast to the shadows, half-truths, disappointments, and the hurts of the world that we see all around us.

In our church we are inspired by the Good News that there is more to life than what is normally seen, heard, touched, and tasted. We are reminded that we are more than just matter—we are Spirit as well. We are reminded that we are creatures made in the image of our Creator...and we are reminded that we have a greater destiny beyond just living out our threescore and ten or twenty years before we return to the dust from which we came. Our Church inspires us to live as citizens of the Kingdom of God--an allegiance that will transform our outlook, our priorities, and our actions!

Our Church is a sanctuary—a place to feel safe and know that we are no longer stranger and aliens in this world. Our Church is a sanctuary where we can come to laugh with joy or cry real tears of hurt and sadness. Our Church is a sanctuary where we are free to explore our spirituality without being judged or expelled. Our Church is a sanctuary where we can challenge ourselves and grow in our understanding of the wonder of it all—what Paul called "the breadth and length and height and depths" of Life. And yes, our Church is a place where we can make mistakes and experience GRACE—the Good News that we are still loved and forgiven. How many places in this world are sanctuaries like that?

Our Church is a place where we can practice learning to live by the rule of love, rather than the rule of pleasure, the rule of fear, the rule of power, the rule of survival of the fittest, the rule of revenge, or the rule of uniformity and conformity. That's not an easy thing to do...even in the household of God! But there are few other places in life, other than Church, that make living by the rule of love THE priority...which is why Church is still needed.

Our Church is a place that grows people together. You've heard the phrase "no man is an island," yet increasingly we see how people are growing apart in our society—how we are becoming more and more polarized with an "us against them" mentality which leads to more and more isolation and a deepening suspicion and mistrust of others.

But our Church seeks to bring people together, not wedge them apart. Our Church seeks to take us as individuals and grow us, to build us together into something grand, something important: a community of faith that is, as Paul describes it, a holy temple; a fit dwelling place for God. In our church we can laugh with each other, support each other in our hard times, encourage and console one another, LISTEN

and HEAR one another, pray for one another, be there for one another...and in the midst of those kinds of relationships the Spirit of God is pleased to dwell.

What other blessings could we mention? There are so many, really...

Our Church is a place we can do mission work together,

Our Church is a place we can sit down and eat together,

Our Church is a place where we remember our traditions, while looking eagerly to the future,

Our Church is a place where we take risks for the sake of the greater good that may emerge;

Our Church is the place where we can grow toward the Peace that passes all understanding, and build our lives on that Peace. Those are some really amazing blessings when you think about them!

Friends, our church waits for us: a building to be filled...a movement to be joined...a way of life to be lived...a household of God that is waiting to grow. What is needed is US—good “citizens” who join the faithful of all ages in responding to the call of God to grow together in faith and action—and in so doing, bless the world. May we all remember the blessings our church offers us, and prayerfully discern what God wishes each of us to contribute in return. If we would all do that, then we, like the church in Ephesus, will grow together into a household of God where the Spirit of God is **very pleased** to dwell!

–Pastor Craig

Women's Fellowship Spring Thrift Sale

Another successful sale in the books.



Chairperson, Thrift Sale

Thank you to each of you who helped donate, sort or unbox items, clean-up and haul the leftovers, bring food for workers, or work during the sale. This project could not be done if not for each of you.

As a result, we have again raised **\$1,500.00+** to help fund the gifts we give in May to deserving organizations in this community and around the world.

You are this church in action.

Thank you all so much!!!

Cindy Henning

**Next Sale
September
25 & 26**



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

M 8 am - 1 pm
T 9 am - 1 pm
W 8 am - 12:30, 1 pm to 4:30
Th 8 am - 12:30, 1 pm to 4:30
F 9 am - 1 pm

ATTENDANCE

April 5 104	April 12 77
April 19 119	April 26 81

Church Staff

Rev. Craig Blaufuss, Pastor
Office: **832-2232** Cell **297-4316**
Pastor's email: revcraigblaufuss@wmtel.net
Michele Omvig: Admin. Assist. **838-2989**
Church's e-mail: fcuccwc@wmtel.net
Sharon Perry: Stephen Ministry Ldr **832-5435**
Dale Olson: Stephen Ministry Ldr **839-5619**
Choir Director
Organist
Mary Van Diest: Pianist **832-3754**
Curt/Lorraine McCoskey: Cust's. **832-5341**
Tracy Wehrhan: Financial Secretary **297-0370**
Luverne Bierle: Church Treasurer **832-4752**



Ten Absolutes for Caregivers

Never argue - instead agree
Never reason - instead divert
Never shame - instead distract
Never lecture - instead reassure
Never say 'remember' - instead reminisce
Never say 'I told you' - instead repeat / regroup
Never say 'you can't' - instead say "Let's do this"
Never command / demand - instead ask / model
Never condescend - instead encourage / praise
Never force - instead reinforce

Scholarships

The Finance Board will be receiving scholarship applications until June 30th. Applications will be available from the church office after May 3.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

4 - Richard Abbott
5 - Kari Rabe
5 - Becky Myers
6 - Mitchell Downs
8 - Dorothy Englehart
9 - Jon Reinsel
9 - Connie Gustafson
11 - Bob Butrick
11 - Ina Cormaney
11 - Lauren Leman
11 - Kelly Midtling
11 - Mabel Prescott
12 - Heather Butrick
15 - Lailah Jean Luevanos
15 - Lukah Lee Luevanos
16 - Neil Oberender
16 - Katie Fox
19 - Gretchen Bruner
22 - Hayden Butrick
22 - Sue Jaycox
22 - Lisa Swanson
25 - Mike Burtnett
26 - Carol Crystal
29 - Linda Lahr
29 - Jennifer Yungclas



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

1 - Jeff & Cori Fogle
2 - Emily & Troy Stockdale
4 - Al & Jan Maxon
7 - Craig & Vicki Blaufuss
16 - David & Liz Weieneth
17 - Tracy & Glenda Wehrhan
29 - Dan & Donna Ryherd
30 - Joseph & Amy Doolittle

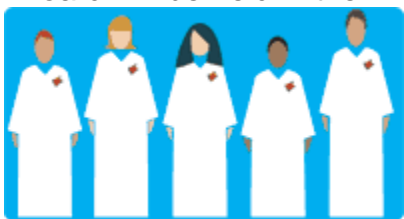
In Memorium

Our prayers are with the family of Nancy Shelton, who passed away on April 27. A memorial service will be held for Nancy in our sanctuary on Saturday, May 2 at 11:00 am. Visitation will also be held at First Congregational on Friday, May 1 from 5:00 to 8:00 pm. She will be greatly missed.

Confirmation The confirmation class will tour the Grotto of the Redemption in West Bend on Saturday, May 9. We will leave the church at 9 am and should return about 2:30 pm.

Confirmation Sunday: May 24

On Pentecost Sunday, May 24, 3 of our young people will receive the Rite of Confirmation during our service of worship. Our 2015 confirmands are: Jackson Lemman, Dylan McCoskey, and Kaya Nelson. Our confirmands will present their faith statements during the service, and Kayla Nelson will receive the sacrament of Baptism prior to her confirmation. Afterward a reception hosted by the Christian Education Board will be held in their honor.



Kudos to Our Confirmands

Promotion/ Participation Sunday: May 17

On May 17 we will conclude our Spring Christian Education programming and recess for the summer months. On this Sunday we will honor our teachers and students for their participation in Sunday School and KLAB, and present children's Bibles to students K-4th grade and adult Bibles to students in the 5th grade and above who have not yet received them. Join us for a special Sunday that honors our Christian Education ministries!

Graduation Sunday: May 10

On May 10 we will honor our two High School graduates, Jenna Short and Alexis Tudor, during worship, and we will have the opportunity to hear them speak of their future

plans. We will also honor "mothers" of all ages during this service!



KLAB News

May 6 will be our last regular KLAB session before summer recess, and on Friday, May 8 we will hold a KLAB overnight lock-in at the church starting at 7:00 pm and ending at 8:00 am on Saturday.

VBS is coming!

Mark your calendars on July 6-10 for our joint VBS program, to be held at Asbury UMC. This year we are reverting back to an afternoon schedule (1-4 pm), and we need volunteers to help with: Music, Crafts, Story time, Science, and Games! There is a sign up sheet in fellowship hall. Also—there will be a **VBS organizational meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 10 a.m., at Asbury UMC**. Come and help make plans for another great VBS!

Clean Up! 10 hardy members of our church met at the Kmart/ McDonald's parking lot Tuesday evening and battled the wind to pick up 14 bags of trash. Be sure and check out the green area to the east of the parking lot and see how clean it looks now!! A BIG thanks to all of you who helped.

Mission Board



Summer Lunch Program begins June 8

The Webster City summer lunch program will again be held at the Webster City Middle School beginning June 8, and ending July 31. The food service at the school will prepare the meals, and volunteers are again needed each week to supervise the lunch room and to provide activities. First Congregational will again be the lead-off volunteer group to begin the summer lunch program, and your help is needed! We need a volunteer coordinator and several volunteers each day to pass out free books, set tables, direct and assist children with the meal, lead activities, and clean up afterward. Look for a volunteer sign-up sheet in the near future.

Children's Books Needed

Webster City will again hold a Summer lunch program at Webster City Middle school beginning June 8, and children's books are again wanted for the book give away that is part of the program. If you have any young people's books to spare please bring them to the church office, or to Pastor Craig.



Summer Worship Services begin May 31

Our summer worship services will begin Sunday, May 31. The time of the summer services will be 9:30 a.m., and the choir will be in recess for the duration of the summer. Summer music is needed! If you, or someone you know, is willing to offer music for our summer services, please let Dalene Schlitter, the chairperson of the Music committee, know.

Meals'N More

On Wednesday, May 6th please join us for Meals'N More. This will be a Pot Luck with a theme of "Mother Knows Best." We are inviting

everyone to bring their favorite dish Mom used to make... and the recipe too! We will compile a simple booklet of all of the recipes from this night for everyone to enjoy.

Key found in Thrift Sale Purse

Did you donate this Miche Purse to the Thrift Sale? A key was found inside and can be claimed at the UCC church office. Contact Michele at 832-2232.



Strengthen the Church Special Offering: May 24

On Sunday, May 24 we will be receiving the Strengthen the Church special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. This offering builds the UCC's future. It funds new congregations and renews existing ones. It supports programs for youth and young adults and nurtures current and future leaders. Directed to local Conferences, Local Church Ministries and the Stillspeaking Ministry, Strengthen the Church gifts help to create vibrant church communities of extravagant welcome.

9:15 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL
10:30 A.M. WORSHIP

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Webster City, Iowa

Cabinet Meeting – April 14, 2015

Members Present:

Moderator-----	Luverne Bierle	Pastor-----	Rev. Craig Blaufuss
Vice-Moderator---		Trustees-----	Tom Riemenschneider
Finance Sec.-----		Women's Fellowship-	Joyce Gelhaus
Finance-----	Tracy Wehrhan	Mission-----	Ginnie Veach
Staff/Parish-----	Dalene Schlitter	Worship-----	Holly Riemenschneider
Christian Ed-----	Vicki Blaufuss	Evangelism-----	Sharon Perry
Treasurer-----	Luverne Bierle	Clerk-----	Mary Van Diest

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by the Moderator, Luverne Bierle. Rev. Blaufuss offered a meditation and prayer. Vicki Blaufuss moved with a second by Tracy Wehrhan, to approve the minutes of the March cabinet meeting as printed in the April newsletter. Committee and board reports were open for review and discussion. The Hospitality Board, which is under Evangelism, is using two greeters and two ushers each Sunday. They are also reminded to clean out the children's bags. Luverne presented the Treasurer's report: March offering of \$18,140.35 and expenses of \$29,148.30. Luverne moved and Dalene seconded that the report be put to audit. Pending Business: Due to the death of Myra Maxon, Tracy Wehrhan will finish her year as Financial Secretary and Josi Greenley will be our organist through May. Holly Riemenschneider and Joyce Gelhaus will fill in for Michele Omvig, administrative assistant, when she is ill or on vacation. At the May Cabinet meeting the attendees will review the church membership list as required by our constitution.

REPORTS OF PASTOR, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Pastor's Report: Care center worship services were held at Windsor Manor and Southfield on March 22. On the 1st Tuesday of the month, Pastor Craig will be leading the gospel hour at Southfield. On Palm Sunday we marked the death of Myra Maxon by having the organ remain silent during the entire service, and our children sang "Angels Among Us" as a tribute to Myra. On Maundy Thursday we gathered in the sanctuary for a service entitled "The Hour Has Come", with reflections on the last words of Christ from the cross. Easter Sunday we began with a Son-Rise service, followed by Breakfast and an Easter egg hunt in the vacant lot, and then we gathered for traditional worship at 10:30. Thanks go to Josi Greenley for playing the organ while we conduct a search for our new organist. She will play until the end of May. Also thanks go to Karin Yungclas, who is leading rehearsals and directing the choir. Ann Sherve-Ose led the KLAB children in singing and playing the ORFF instruments during the April 12th worship service. She will lead Orff for a final session on April 22nd. KLAB has been studying Lent, Holy Week and Easter. We are still averaging 14-18 students each week. The confirmands toured the Hindu Temple in Madrid on March 14th. The group has been studying the meaning of the crucifixion, Easter, and now are concentrating on worship and the sacraments. The adult education class continues to do short topical studies: finished units on forgiveness, justice and

the meaning of the atonement and now exploring “toxic beliefs”. Beginning Wed. April 15th at 7:00 pm, Pastor Craig will be leading a 3 week study on “Poverty in America”. Each session will last an hour; there will be 3 sessions in all. The documentary, “The Line”, which examines the lives of four people living below the poverty line, will be used. The school Backpacks against Hunger fund has nearly \$12,000 in donations. Planning meetings have begun for the Webster City summer lunch program. It will begin June 8th and continue until July 31st. Again we will be asking for donations of books to hand out during this program. A new grief support series started April 12th with 3 participants. The program is being led by Al Fiala and Ginnie Veach, and will last 6 weeks. We currently have 8 Stephen ministers; 5 are matched with care receivers. The NW Association CoM had their annual licensing event for area licensed pastors on March 21st in Primghar. We recently met with the Congregational UCC church in Blairsburg for a periodic support consultation. They have been sharing a pastor with Kamrar Presbyterian, but are unsure if that arrangement will continue.

Board of Trustees and Finance Board: March 8th meeting: The trustees informed the Finance Board that the renovation project would cost \$220,000. This amount could not be worked out for financing. The Finance Board gave some possible things that we could do. We had to stay within the \$144,000 that was approved. The Finance Board said that some roof repair will be needed in a couple of years, so we need to keep some funds available for that. Now the Trustees have to figure out what part of the renovation will be done. We have \$100,000 of the funds to use, since \$25,000 is being used for the air condition in Fellowship Hall and \$19,000 for Wayne Schlotfeldt’s charges. The Trustees will meet this week and make the decision. March 13th meeting: Purpose of the meeting was to decide what part of the renovation we will be doing, with the funds, \$101,400, that Finance Board informed us were available. These decisions were made: not to do the entryway, carpet and the media room. The entryway we will work on and maybe do at another time. Thought that possibly volunteers could do the media room. Plan on doing the carpet in 2016. A motion was made to have Wayne Schlotfeldt ask Jensen Builders what the cost of the renovation would be if the following was done: stairway, restrooms, basement, entryway modification, office door, new door for Pastor’s study to match the other doors and added some knock down on the walls in the stairway. Motion carried. Wayne Schlotfeldt was put on speaker phone so all present could ask questions. He will call Jensen Builders and get the cost for modified list of renovations. He also said that Jensen Builders did find a way to modify the entryway which would be \$5000 less. As soon as Wayne receives the information from Jensen Builders he will get it to Tom. Wayne also stated that since we will not be doing the entryway the \$3000 he would have charged to finish the project would be cut in half, \$1500. April 12th: Jensen Builders are still interested in doing the renovation project. There was discussion on the new costs proposed by Jensen Builders. Gretchen Bruner made the motion that we go with the new cost proposal. Les Ploeger seconded. Motion was approved. A request to use the church for piano lessons on Wednesday late afternoon was denied because it would interfere with choir rehearsal. A request for church usage on Sunday, Sept. 6th from 12:00-5:00 pm for Bruce and Sharon Perry’s 50th wedding anniversary was approved. An estimate for church roof repair was given to the Trustees from the Finance Board. The Trustees will hold off on this until after the renovation.

Christian Ed Board: March 11th: Final plans were made for the Easter breakfast. Vicki Blaufuss was voted to be the new chairperson and cabinet rep. The last day of KLAB will be May 6th, with a trip to the Dairy Queen. Summer KLAB will consist of 1 or possibly 2 events per month during the summer. Anyone with any ideas or if you can help please contact Pastor Craig. KLAB’s lock-in date will be announced later. Pastor Craig will obtain more information on

VBS. Graduation Sunday will be May 10th. There are two graduates this year: Jenna Short and Alexis Tudor. Leah Yungclas will furnish gifts for the graduates, Jane Klaver the flowers and sheet cake and Vicki the lemonade. She will also check on the supply of mints and nuts and will purchase if needed. A plea is being put out for church school teachers for this fall for pre-k and the 14-15 year olds. On May 17th Participation Sunday will be observed. This is also the last day of Sunday school. It is hoped that another board will do the coffee following worship that Sunday. Bibles will be given to the following: Children's-Greta Kenville, Becca Kenville, Jasmine Remington, Amanda Lahr and Zach Lahr, Adults-Amanda Remington, Dylan McCoskey, Chesney Fuller, Molly Kenville and Nick Nelson. Confirmation Sunday will be May 24th. Our confirmands are Kayla Nelson, Dylan McCoskey and Jackson Leman. Christian Ed will do the coffee after worship with Leah in charge of gifts, Jane a ½ sheet cake, Vicki lemonade, mints and nuts. The high school class will now be combined with Leah Maass' class. The next meeting will be August 2th at 5:15 pm.

Mission Board: The One Great Hour of Sharing offering brought in \$1,153. The Gourmet Kitchens donations for the D/SAOC auction brought \$1,025 at their auction. The Beacon of Hope meals was served to 20 residents on March 31st. The Poverty in America study begins Wed. April 15th at 7:00 pm. All are welcome to attend. Those considering participating in a mission trip this summer should notify a board member soon. So far Joyce Gelhaus and her nephew, Carl, have expressed interest. Progress continues on the Reach out and Read literacy program. Books are needed for this program. We will again be picking up trash east of the K-Mart parking lot on April 21st at 4:30 pm. The summer lunch program will run from June 8th to July 31st. The pickle jar will go out on May 3 to collect donations for Special Olympics. Strengthen the Church offering will be collected in May. The Ice Cream Social will be held at our church this June. Do watch for the date and offer your help for this joint project with Faith Methodist. The next meeting is May 7th at 5:00 pm.

Women's Fellowship: Pastor Craig gave an update on our members who need our continued support. Verna Bierle gave the Treasurer's report: Old balance-\$1720.30, New balance-\$2170.07, Alverson Trust-\$1735.52. Shirley Yungclas continues to send sympathy and get well cards. Cindy Henning reported receiving a thank you from the McMurray's. On Saturday, May 2nd, we will be doing the nursing home birthdays. From each circle a worker and 3 doz. cookies are needed. The cookies are to be delivered to the church by noon that day. The Thrift Sale will be April 24-25. The May dinner will be May 20th at 5:30 pm. The circle reports are to be given to Cindy Henning and Joyce Gelhaus. Mabel Prescott will be the program presenter. The procedure for serving funerals was reviewed and discussed. Joyce provided guidelines for each circle to share with its members. She will also do the planting of the planters in front of church. Representatives from each church met to discuss Women's Lenten Luncheons. They wish to continue but must be ecumenical programs. We were not on church rotation to serve the lunch because we used to host Men's Lenten Luncheons, however they no longer meet. Cindy Henning moved and Carol Crystal seconded that we now become part of the rotation. Motion passed. Verna Bierle will inform the luncheon committee.

Next cabinet meeting will be May 12, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Van Diest, Church Clerk

Treasurer's Report

<u>INCOME</u>	March	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
Pledges and Offerings	\$18,140.35	\$40,492.63
Other Income	543.00	556.53
Memorial/Special Income/Interest	<u>5,369.47</u>	<u>8,180.88</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$24,052.47	\$49,230.04
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Outreach and Mission	\$1,583.33	\$4,205.04
Pastoral Services	10,479.13	20,851.29
Maintenance and Repairs	14,656.08	19,780.01
Church Office	2,783.24	8,844.52
Music Ministry	612.50	1,837.50
Christian Education	0.00	170.89
Local Ministry	0.00	37.45
Misc. Expenses	<u>23.50</u>	<u>784.55</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$30,137.78	\$56,511.25

First Congregational United Church of Christ
1000 Willson Avenue
Webster City, IA 50595

Address Service Requested

God is still speaking
to everyone in the home of:

